

FORT SIMCOE,  
COMMANDANT RESIDENCE & BLOCKHOUSE,  
Ft. Simcoe, Yakima County, Washington.

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Washington

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
Louis Baeder, District Officer, WPA.  
1615 Smith Tower, Seattle, Washington.

FORT SIMCOE

COMMANDANT RESIDENCE, & BLOCKHOUSE.

Ft. Simcoe, Yakima County, Washington.

COMMANDANT HOUSE

OWNER:-- U. S. Government.

DATE OF ERECTION:-- Established 1856; garrisoned 1858 with three companies.

BUILDER:-- Soldiers of the garrison.

PRESENT CONDITION:--Excellent state of preservation.

NUMBER OF STORIES:--Two stories with no basement.

MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:-- Foundation is of rough cut native stone; walls 3"x 4" studs, 20" centers, with outside 8" boards and 1"x 2½" battens. Inside walls and ceilings of random width T & G boards and in some instances plastered. Chimneys are brick; fireplaces are of brick and of stone. Floors T & G flooring; roof shingled; stair hand rail and newel are white mahogany.

OTHER EXISTING RECORDS

AND HISTORY DATA:-- The site was first chosen as a fort and then as an agency upon the advice of Col. Wright, who urged the warm climate and favorable conditions of all sorts, including a region of springs known among the Indians as "Wool Kool".

It is reported that materials for the building were brought around Cape Horn, transported from Portland, Oregon, via the Dalles, to the fort. The extent of this is unknown.

The first agent, R. H. Lonsdale was appointed in 1860, and was relieved several months later upon serious charges being brought against him. A. A. Bancroft was appointed in 1861 by President Lincoln, his mishandling of the Indians aroused them and brought remonstrances of his treatment of them from James H. Wilbur, superintendent of schools; whereupon Bancroft had Wilbur removed, with the result that Wilbur, with abundant evidence and data, appeared before President Lincoln, who immediately recalled Bancroft, appointing Wilbur in his place in 1864; his tenure lasting 16 years.

FORT SIMCOE (Continued).

The history of Simcoe, centers around two agents of marked character, "Father" Wilbur, a methodist minister, and Jay Lynch, whose combined tenure was 34 years, during which proper justice was meted out to the Indians. Though the old Oak Tree, used as a whipping post, still stands in front of the agents house, this means of punishment used by "Father" Wilbur on occasion, did not signify brutality usually connected with it, for none has been quite so well loved by the Indians as he.

Older Indians point out the brow of Toppenish Ridge, where soldiers halted in retreat to bury a brass cannon from the approaching Indians, and where Indian arrow heads dug up indicate the battle ground by Toppenish Creek.

It is said that Generals, Grant and Sheridan, served as Lieutenants at the fort.

BLOCKHOUSE

PRESENT CONDITION:- Walls in good state of repair, roof has been replaced.

NUMBER OF STORIES:- One story only.

MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:- Walls are of squared adzed logs, with corners dovetailed with two way pitch, the joints so fitted that, generally, they will not admit the insertion of a knife blade. An excellent example of workmanship.

OTHER EXISTING RECORDS

AND HISTORY DATA:- This is one of four blockhouses built originally as protection against hostile Indians.

Historic data obtained by and through the Yakima Junior Chamber of Commerce.

MEASURED AND DRAWN:- July, August and September, 1936.

AUTHOR:

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